

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HAMILTON 287

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, MILI, PINT, BD

SUBJ: LABOR DISPUTE AT NAS BERMUDA

REF: HAMILTON 277 OF 10/3/75

1. AT UNION REQUEST, WE, GOB MINISTER OF LABOR WOOLRIDGE AND HIS TOP ASSISTANTS MET OCT. 10 WITH BIU LEADERSHIP AT MIN. LABOR. BIU PRESIDENT OTTIWELL SIMMONS DID MOST OF THE TALKING DURING TWO-HOUR MEETING, WITH OCCASIONAL PAUSES FOR ACRIMONIOUS EXCHANGES WITH WOOLRIDGE.
2. SIMMONS URGED ALL PARTIES TO "SEARCH FOR FORMULA

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FOR SETTLEMENT" OF UNION'S LONG-RUNNING DISPUTE WITH KEMMONS WILSON CONSTRUCTION COMPANY (KWCC). HE ASSERTED THAT KWCC HAD MISLED BOTH GOB AND USG BY STATING THAT (A) IT OFFERED KW EMPLOYEES WORKING CONDITIONS NO LESS FAVORABLE THAN ENJOYED BY CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ON OTHER PROJECTS IN BERMUDA AND (B) NAVY'S CONTRACT INHIBITS KWCC FROM GRANTING UNION RECOGNITION. SIMMONS CITED EXAMPLES WHERE, UNDER SOME CONDITIONS, KW BENEFITS PACKAGE WOULD PAY WORKERS LESS THAN STANDARD UNION BENEFITS PLAN ALLEGEDLY WOULD. REFERRING TO PARA 5 (D) (1)

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OF GSA STANDARD FORM 23A, HE ASSERTED THAT, CONTRARY

TO KWCC'S STATEMENTS, A NAVY CONTRACTOR CANNOT BE PENALIZED FOR STRIKE DELAYS. ACCORDING SIMMONS, APPARENT INACCURACIES IN PUBLIC KWCC POSITIONS SERIOUSLY ERODE FIRM'S CREDIBILITY, RAISING POSSIBILITY THAT KWCC CAME TO BERMUDA WITH INTENT TO "EXPLOIT" LOCAL WORKERS AND "BUST OUR UNION".

3. SIMMONS DEPLORED DETRIMENTAL LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES PRESENT DISPUTE WOULD HAVE ON LOCAL IMAGE U.S. BASES IN BERMUDA. HE ASSERTED THAT BIU ENDEAVORING AVOID USE

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OF STRIKE WEAPON IN KW DISPUTE, BUT THAT LANGUAGE OF NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND SPECIFICATION FOR NAS HOUSING CONTRACT (WHICH STIPULATES THAT NAVY REPRESENTITIVES CANNOT INTERVENE IN LABOR RELATIONS MATTERS "UNLESS DISPUTES DEVELOP THAT INTERFERE WITH THE PROPER PERFORMANCE OF THE CONTRACT, AT WHICH TIME THE REPRESENTATIVE MAY ENDEAVOR TO ASSIST IN SETTLING THE DIFFICULTY", OR REFER THE MATTER FOR ARBITRATION OR TO THE NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEER COMMAND) CONSTITUTES VIRTUAL INVITATION FOR UNION TO STRIKE AS MEANS TO FORCE KWCC RECOGNITION OF BIU. SIMMONS REPEATED EARLIER VOW TO RAISE DISPUTE AT U.S. BASE HERE AT NEXT WEEK'S ICFTU MEETING IN MEXICO CITY. RETURNING TO "SEARCH FOR FORMULA" THEME, SIMMONS MENTIONED "ARBITRATION BEFORE IMPARTIAL BODY" AS "POSSIBLE SOLUTION". THEN BACKED AWAY WHEN GOB DEPUTY LABOR RELATIONS OFFICER RICHARDSON ATTEMPTED TO PIN HIM DOWN ON THIS POINT. SIMMONS DID STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT "UNION WOULD LOOK FAVORABLY UPON A PROPOSAL FOR ARBITRATION".

4. ACCORDING NAVY, SF 23A CLAUSE CITED PARA 2 ABOVE DOES NOT NECESSARILY APPLY TO STRIKES BROUGHT ON BY ACTIONS OF

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CONTRACTOR, SO KWCC STANCE ON THIS POINT NOT ENTIRELY INCORRECT. WE PROMISED BIU TO INVESTIGATE RULES FOR SETTLING SIMILAR RECOGNITION DISPUTES AT AMERICAN BASES
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IN U.S. AND IN OTHER COUNTRIES, AND PROMISED WOOLRIDGE TO "UNDERTAKE CERTAIN INQUIRIES" INTO POSSIBILITY OF FORMING ARBITRATION PANEL EMPOWERED TO SETTLE PRESENT SITUATION.

5. IN DISCUSSIONS OUTSIDE PRESENCE BIU OFFICERS, WOOLRIDGE REPEATED HIS PREVIOUS ASSESSMENTS THAT SIMMONS'S STANCE IN DISPUTE NOT SUPPORTED BY EITHER MAJORITY BIU MEMBERSHIP OR BY WORKERS EMPLOYED AT KW SITE. WOOLRIDGE

ALSO NOTED THAT OPPOSITION PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY HAD NOT COMMENTED PUBLICLY ON KW DISPUTE THUS FAR, ADDING THAT IN PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS PLP POLITICIANS HAVE SHOWN NO INCLINATION TO BECOME INVOLVED.

6. CONAS BERMUDA CAPT. ANASTON WILL BE IN NORFOLK OCT.

14. HE WILL ENDEAVOR HAVE REP NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND (THE CONTRACTING OFFICE) VISIT BERMUDA O/A NOV. 4 TO DETERMINE WHETHER THERE ANY APPLICABILITY THAT COMMAND INTERVENING IN ACCORDANCE CLAUSE QUOTED

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PARA 3 ABOVE - GOB AND BIU AGREED NOV. 4 VISIT.

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